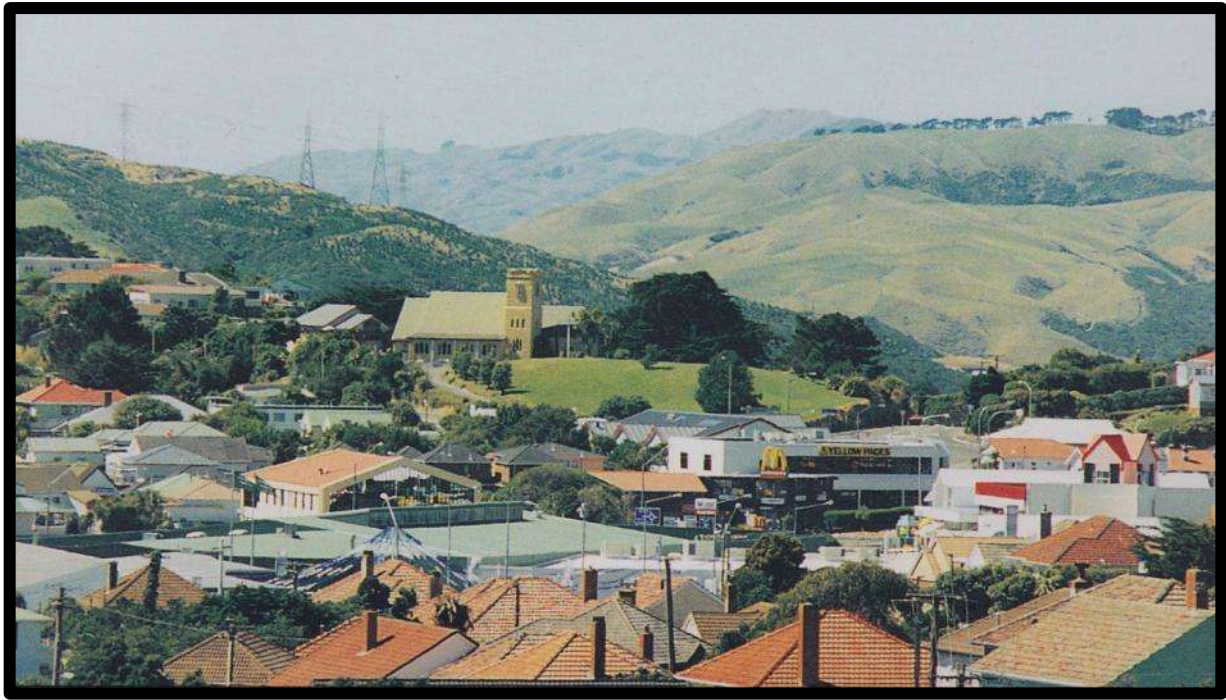




# LANDMARK OF FAITH



**View across Johnsonville from South 1997**



**St John's interior view 1997**

**A SHORT HISTORY  
OF  
ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH  
JOHNSONVILLE  
1847 – 1997**



**ORIGINAL SHORT HISTORY OF ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH  
JOHNSONVILLE, NEW ZEALAND, BY THE REV. J.B. ARLIDGE, B.A.  
WITH ADDED MATERIAL  
1925 - 1997 BY J.P. BENTALL' A.N.Z.I.A.**

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## **INDEX OF LINE DRAWINGS IN THIS BOOKLET WHICH ILLUSTRATE ITEMS USED AT ST. JOHN'S**

- Page 1                Brass processional cross carried into the Sanctuary at St. John's ahead of choir, clergy and leaders, at the commencement of services.
- Page 8                The oak altar built in 1990.
- Page 12              The stone font with wooden cover and brass jug. The letters IHS carved into the stone are the Greek first letters of the name "Jesus".
- Page 17              The carved oak lectern to be found in front of the Nave.
- Page 27                The silver chalice presented by Eric and Isla Norris in memory of their daughter Gaye.
- Page 28              The cross with the Greek letters "alpha- and "omega" in the east window
- Page 31                The silver ciborium contains the bread at Holy Communion, purchased in memory of Mr. Ray Hill.
- Page 40                A group of flags owned by the local Scout and Guide movement to be found at the rear of the Nave.

The above sketches, except those on pages 8 & 28, were drawn by Trevor Lawrence.

## **FOREWORD**

This year 1997 St. John's is celebrating 150 years of life and worship in the Johnsonville community. Who would have thought that Johnsonville would have grown to become the vibrant community it now is?

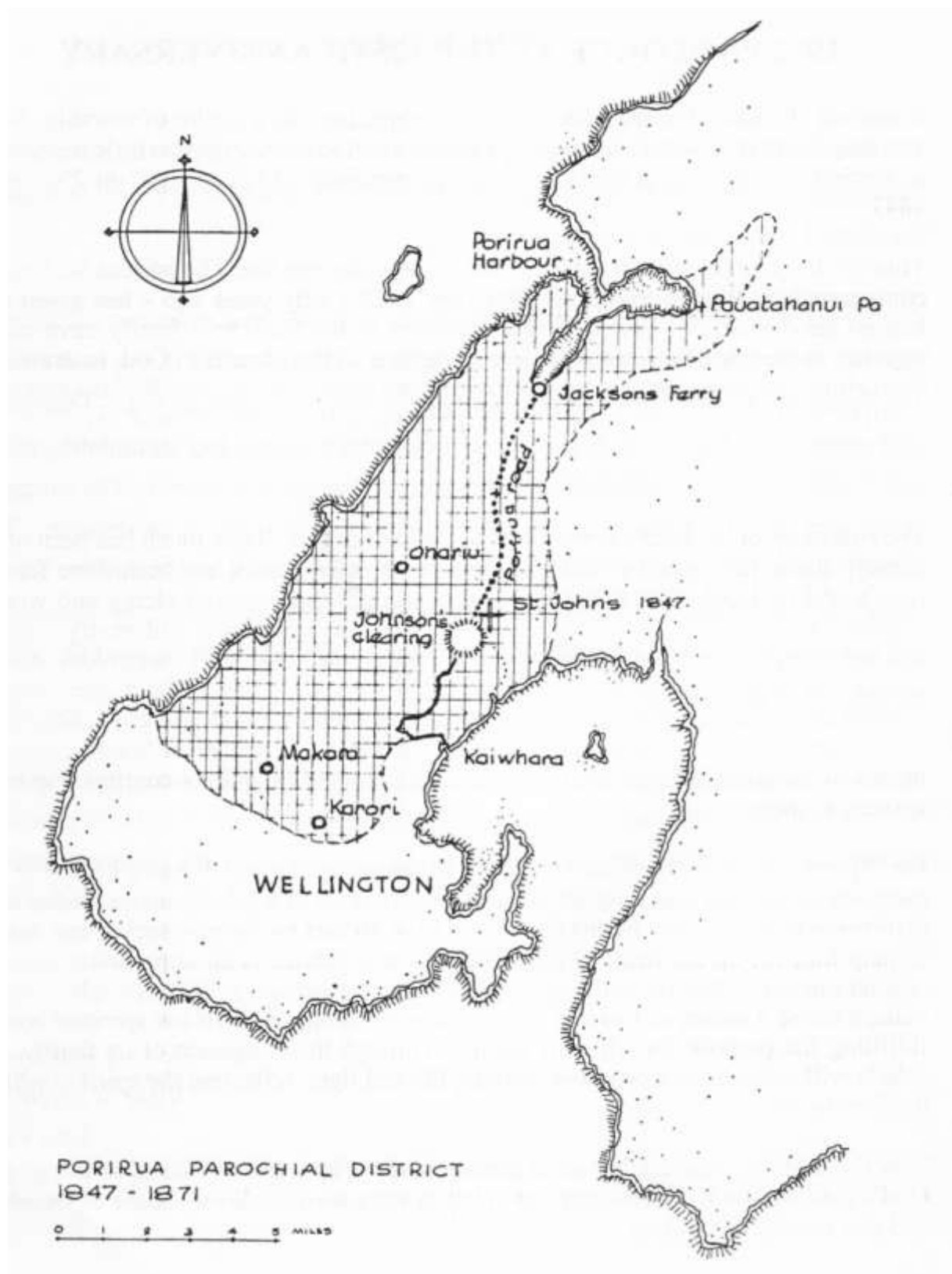
The foresight of early church pioneers to build a church on a prominent section of land has meant that St. John's has always been a visual presence in the community. The Scriptures record Jesus' saying; 'a city built on a hill cannot be hid.' This could well apply to St. John's. This history is a book about church and community, as St. John's church over the years has sought to be a presence in this district. The struggles of ministry and the setbacks are recorded along with the times of celebration. The church of the final years of the twentieth century has also a vision for the future. Despite living in a perceived secular community, people find 'community' in the church, and come with a variety of needs and requests. Hence the 'light on the hill' shines undiminished into the future.

St. John's is dedicated to an evangelist saint, bringing a commitment to offer Christian faith and values to Johnsonville. These celebrations then not only record with gratitude the faithful witness of the many who have been members of St. John's, but also celebrate the present, and we look to the future with excitement and anticipation of what will be.

Derek Lightbourne

Vicar of St. Johns

June 1997



*In 1847 St. John's (often known as the Hawtrey Church) was Parish Church to a very large area, indicated approximately on this map. Only two other Anglican Churches existed in the Wellington District: the first St. Paul's which seated 300, and a chapel in Petone seating 50.*



## **1972 PROLOGUE AT THB 125TH ANNIVERSARY**

Wherever British colonists settled a priority objective was a centre of worship. So it was that the first St. John's Church was raised when Johnsonville was little more than a clearing. It was opened by Bishop Selwyn precisely 125 years ago, on 29th July, 1847.

Through the years five churches have been built on the one site. The present St. John's, consecrated by Bishop Sprott on 29th July, 1922 - fifty years ago - has given the longest service of all. For 125 years members of the St. John's family have come together in their spiritual centre to give something of their hearts to God, to draw life from Him, and go out better equipped to love and serve. Though much of the fine line detail of St. John's history is lost, ample survives to show the faith and devotion, the trial and the victory the sowing and the reaping, the disappointments and the joys of twelve generations of parishioners.

The true story of St. John's is essentially a story of people. How much has been done through these 125 years by faithful parishioners! How much has been done for St. John's and its Lord. Our history gives only sampling mention of clergy and wives, wardens and synodsmen, secretaries and treasurers, vestrymen and vestrywomen, Sunday School teachers and lay-readers, organists and choristers, embroiderers and church decorators; of the giving of time, abilities and money without measure; of faithful attendance at worship which, more than anything else, has given St. John's its life. Many are unsung and unremembered in our brief published history but the names of all are written in the great Book of Life, and St. John's continues to bear witness to them.

For 50 years -the present church has been hallowed by prayer. It has a beauty of its own; we are fortunate to have St. John's. The presence of the Lord is not confined to man-made buildings, but in this church we have all that the earnest seeker can desire to help him lift up his heart to his Lord" Yet this jubilee is an appropriate time to remind ourselves that no building is more than an ornament without people. People make a house a home, and so it is with St. John's - people make it our spiritual home, fulfilling the purpose for which it stands. Through the allegiance of its family, St. John's will continue as a centre of warmth, life and light, reflecting the spirit in which the family gathers.

May this history recalling our good heritage and the love and service of so many, and God's guiding hand, increase our appreciation and use of our lovely house of worship and our loyalty to its Lord.

L.W. Porteous  
Vicar 1958 - 73

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

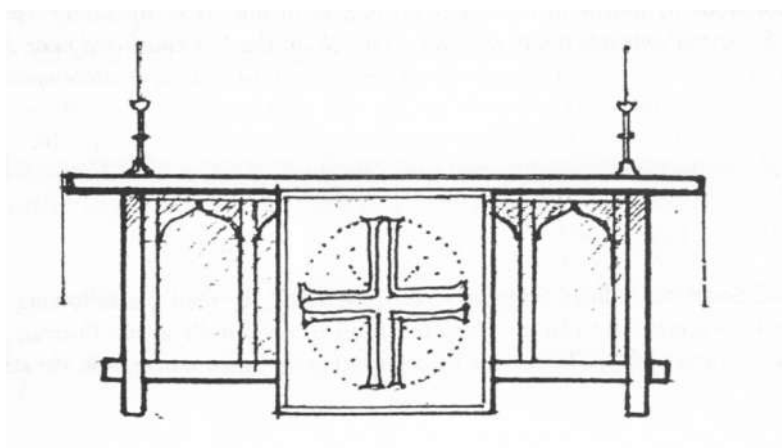
The first portion of this short history of St. John's covering the period from the building of the first church in 1847, to 1925, is the work of the Rev. John Arlidge, Vicar from 1950 - 53, but I understand that much of this history was researched by his wife, a member of the well-known Hogg family of Johnsonville, whom he married while in office here. Only minor changes have been made to this material.

The balance of this history has been researched from vestry minutes and reports, and in discussion with members of St. John's. Particularly I would like to thank the Rev. Bill Porteous, Len and Molly Stebbings, Win Stockdale, Clive and Lois Mildenhall, Jean Mills, Eric and Isla Norris, and Nigel and Fiona Werry.

Thanks are also due to Trevor Lawrence for his excellent pen drawings, and the Onslow Historical Society who made photographs available from the Bob Meyer Collection and material published in the "Onslow Historian". Other useful background writing has been "Up in the Hills" by Bob Meyer, and "Tawa Flat and the Old Porirua Road" by Arthur Carman. I am grateful to Michael Steer for editing the work; my wife Perdita for typing and advising; Bob Mackley and his son Gary for photography; and Charles Wilkinson for his expertise, help and enthusiasm for the project.

Jim Bentall, ANZIA

June 1997.



## CHAPTER 1: EARLY DAYS 1847 - 1855

“How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?”

(Psalm 137, verse 4)

The name "Johnsonville" seems to have sprung from the fact that a man named Johnson was one of the first settlers here and the site originally appears to have been called "Johnson's Clearing". A diary kept by two British Officers on their overland route from Wellington to Auckland, and which was published in the "N.Z. Spectator" on Monday, 8th August, 1846, throws light on the early use of this colloquial name for Johnsonville. The diary commences on 17th March, 1846, *"started at half-past eight a.m. in the company of Rev., Mr G--- on our route to Wanganui. At about eleven arrived at Johnson's Clearing on the Porirua Road, where about forty of the militia were stationed, under the command of Captain Clifford and were constructing a stockade as protection to the few settlers in the neighbourhood. The road thus far is good - afterwards there is a mere bush path to Jackson's Ferry fourteen miles from Wellington at the extremity to the Porirua Harbour."*

In the forties, the first church was built and it is interesting to read an account of those early days written by Edward Jerningham Wakefield. He published a book in 1848 called by the rather grandiose title, "The Handbook for New Zealand, consisting of the most recent information compiled for the use of intending colonists, by a late magistrate of the colony". Describing the Porirua Road after it leaves Wellington, he says, *"The road proceeds for four or five miles over some undulating forest country, occasionally interspersed with clearings and habitations into the valley of the Kenepura River which flows into the south arm of the harbour of Porirua. Twenty-one sections are laid out along this part of the road, and at one spot about five miles from Wellington, a collection of houses and a church in the midst of a wide space of clearing, deserves the rank of a village, and boast the somewhat Yankee name of Johnsonville. There is also here a wooden stockade generally garrisoned by a small detachment of troops from Wellington. The ground for the church and for a school and parsonage, twenty acres in all, was generously given for the purpose by the owners, the Rev. Messrs John and Stephen Hawtrey who reside in England."*

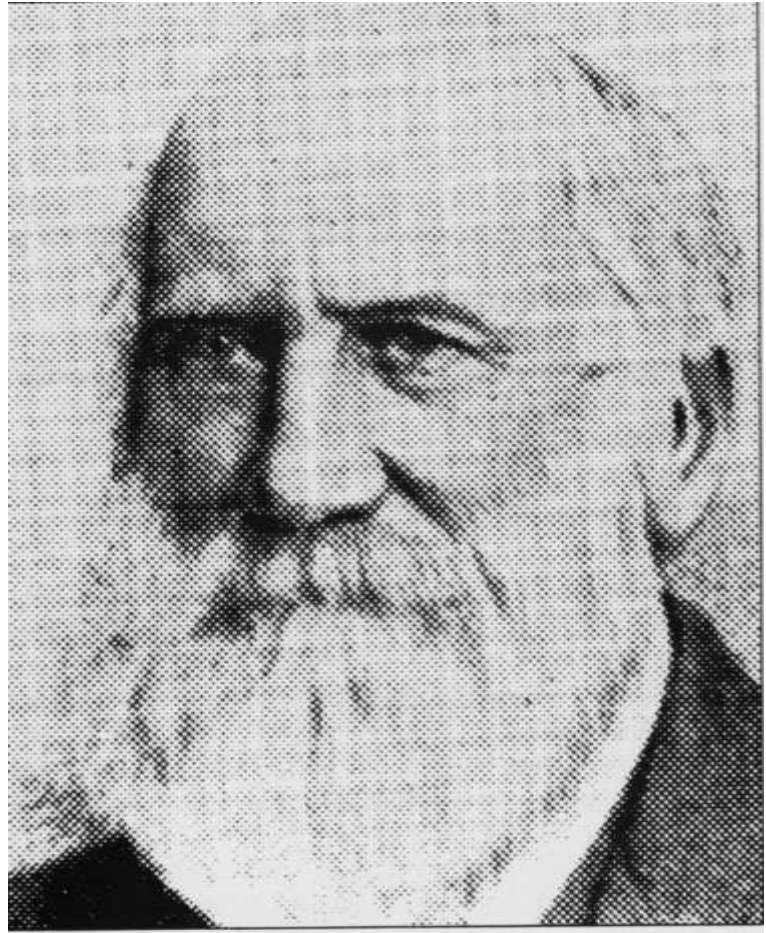
Churches were none too numerous in those days. There was an Anglican Church at Wellington capable of seating 300 persons and an Anglican Chapel at Petone with the seating capacity of 50. *"In addition to these," writes E J. Wakefield, "there are two native chapels of the Church of England, one at Wellington and the other at Petone and the chapel of the Church of England at Johnsonville which is capable of holding one hundred and fifty to two hundred persons."*

Edward Jerningham Wakefield, in his authentic history of the early days, seems to be quite clear that there was a church and not just a churchroom on the site on which our church now stands. That there was probably a church and a church schoolroom on the site in the late forties or early fifties is shown by the following extract from the "Wellington Independent", Wednesday, 14th January, 1946, with the title, "New Church and School" (Later quotations to follow in this short history from the "N.Z. Spectator" bear out the above assumption) *"The Episcopalians are about to erect a church on the Porirua Road near Johnson's Section, with a glebe of five acres in extent. A minister will reside on the spot. It is also contemplated establishing a school so that this important district is at length in a fair way receiving the benefits of religion connected with education. The Wesleyans are about to erect a chapel and schoolhouse for the convenience of the members of the Wesleyan persuasion near to Johnson's Section."*

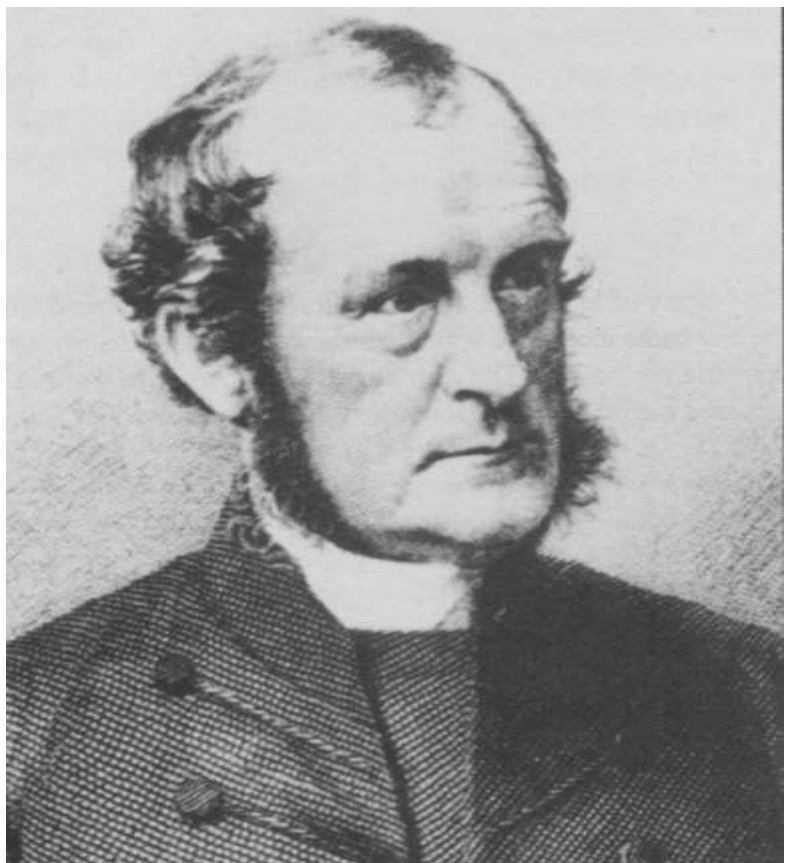
### THE FIRST CHURCH

In the "New Zealand Spectator," dated Saturday, 31st July, 1847, we read the following report on a "new church": *"On Thursday evening, the church which has been recently built on the Porirua Road was opened for the first time for public worship. The service commenced at half past six o'clock, The Rev R. Cole M.A."*

*Rev. Stephen Hawtry -  
In the early 1840's Revs. John and  
Stephen Hawtreys of England gave 20  
acres of their land (Section 13) for the  
building of the church, cemetery and  
glebe (church farm). St John's was  
often known as the "Hawtreys Church".  
(Photo from "The Story of Holy Trinity  
Church, Windsor", England).*



*Bishop Selwyn preached at the  
opening of the first St. John's Church  
on 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1817.*



said prayers and the Bishop of New Zealand preached to a very numerous and attentive congregation. The church which is about five miles from Wellington is a neat wooden structure and is capable of containing from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty persons. The site appears to have been appropriately chosen. The church is built on a section belonging to the Revs. J. and S. Hawtrey who have devoted twenty acres of it to ecclesiastical purposes." Bishop Selwyn preached on the site where our present church stands. We at St. John's are indeed linked with the past. Foremost among the early churches of Wellington, we are unique in the fact that five churches have been built on the site where our present church stands.

## **THE BRANKS TRAGEDY**

Another link we have with those early days here at Johnsonville is through our cemetery. "The Branks Tragedy" is a case in point. John Branks aged thirty-one and his wife aged twenty-seven arrived at Wellington by the "Bengal Merchant" on 2nd March, 1840. He was a Lanarkshire farmer and a member of the Church of Scotland and he and his wife settled down the Porirua Road not far from the Hawtrey Church. Tragedy came to them early. Mrs Branks was killed by a falling tree on the land between Johnsonville and Glenside in December, 1847 and was buried in the cemetery of St. John's Church. She was probably the first person buried there. Then in March, 1849, appeared the following death notice and account of the burial service in the "N.Z. Spectator": *"Died on Thursday, 22nd March, 1819, John Banks, aged forty-one, William Branks, aged eight years ten months, Catherine Branks, aged five years, John Branks, aged two years five months. On Sunday, 25th March, the mortal remains of John Branks and his three children were interred in the burial grounds of the Episcopal Church at Johnsonville, where the remains of his wife Rachel were also interred. One grave now contains the whole family. The father and younger son were placed in one coffin and the elder son and daughter in another. An appropriate memorial service was conducted by the Rev. Mr. Cole."*

The story behind this terrible tragedy concerned a Maori, Henare Maroro, who had been gaoled for some offence and vowed to exact a pakeha life for every year of his imprisonment. The pakehas to fall victim to his vow of vengeance were John Branks, widower, and his little family. He was caught, tried by the Supreme Court and sentenced to death by Mr Justice Chapman. He was hanged in front of Mt. Cook Gaol at 8 o'clock on 19th April, 1849.

Other early burials in the cemetery were Charles Barrow in 1854, aged 31 years; John Whitehouse who died on 19th July, 1854, aged 53 years; and Lois Hunt, wife of John Hunt, on 20th December, 1853, aged 18 years. She was a sister to Cornelius Fisher who died on 5th March, 1914, aged 85 years,

## **DIFFICULT YEARS**

The history of St. John's, Johnsonville, has not been one which has "kept the even tenor of its ways". Just as tragedy came along and wiped out the entire Branks family, so misfortune struck at the Christian community time and time again. The district was known as "The Porirua Parochial District" and in the very early days included Karori, Makara, Johnsonville, Ohariu, Tawa Flat, Porirua, Horokiwi and the whole of the Pautahanui Basin. For a while in the fifties it even included the whole of the Hutt Valley. Even as late as the nineties, the Pauatahanui district came under the jurisdiction of the Vicar of Porirua. Vicars came and went, the parish was left vacant, sometimes for years, the Bishop and neighbouring clergy trying to administer the sacraments as often as they could, and lay-readers doing their best to keep services going. In the seventies there were complaints in Synod about stipends being much in arrears and the parish did not reach real stability until the second cure of Thomas Fancourt in 1886.

Tragedy struck time and time again - first in 1855 when the first church was burnt down, then again in 1860 when the new church they had built was also burnt down, this time uninsured. That the third church was ready for use in 1864 speaks volumes for the determination of those early settlers to have a place of worship.

To gain a picture of those early days of the nineteenth century, we must have in our mind's eye a missionary

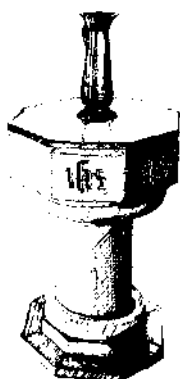
parochial district of 250 square miles (640km<sup>2</sup>), serving a population which had increased to 2,500 by 1895. Karori, Ngaio and Khandallah are now sturdy young parishes standing-on their own, just as to the north Tawa Flat and Pauatahanui, Paekakariki and Paraparaumu are offshoots. It was an arduous life for those early vicars, travelling mainly by horseback to take small services in houses, halls and small daughter churches. In a history such as this, we may pay tribute to that small band of devoted parish priests who have ministered to the scattered flock within their care, to those lay-readers, synodsmen, vestrymen, Sunday School teachers and devoted parishioners who helped keep alight the little centres of worship.

## **PORIRUA ROAD**

Let us now go back to the early days and trace the development of this vast parochial district until the second cure of Thomas Fancourt in 1886. It would appear that in the forties, the Rev. R. Cole, who was the Vicar of the first St. Paul's Church, did what he could to administer the sacraments and take occasional services in our district. One of the earliest vicars of the Porirua District was the Rev. Harry Woodford St' Hill. In the reports of the first Synod held in Wellington in 1859, we find him in charge of the whole of the Porirua and Hutt District - a tremendous parochial district. The Rev. H.W. St. Hill had many contacts with St' John's extending well into the seventies and must have become a well known and beloved figure to many church families in Johnsonville. Mr E. Battersbee was first Synodsmen for the Porirua Road, a position he was to hold for many years. The parochial District of Porirua was often referred to as Porirua Road for it was along this main routenorth that the development of the district progressed.

It is fitting here to describe an account of the building of the Porirua Road from Johnsonville to Porirua by the military authorities in 1846, the account of which appeared in the "N.Z.. Government Gazelte", 24th January 1850: *"The Porirua Road, commencing near the Hawtrey Church and ending near Jackson's Ferry, was commenced on 1st May, 1816 by a military party commanded by Lieutenant Elliott, 99th regiment, stationed near Jackson's Ferry, and a similar party commanded by Lieutenant Herbert, 58th regiment, was a few days later established at the other end of the line near the Hawtrey Church. They had scarcely begun to work when the attack upon Boulcott's farm in Lower Hutt, where so many men of the 58th regiment were killed and wounded, showed the necessity for stockading the road party, marching to their work armed and accoutred, working under the protection of sentries, and taking every precaution against similar surprise lo which the dense forest which covered the whole country made them particularly liable. "*

It appears that they had their exciting and dangerous times in those days too. The road was completed in eighteen months and opened in December 1847 and the seven miles four chains from the Hawtrey Church to Jackson's Ferry, which included many bridges, cost only seven hundred pounds<sup>1</sup> a mile, a sum that the writer thought was very reasonable indeed.



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<sup>1</sup> This is around \$155,000 in 2013 values ([http://www.rbnz.govt.nz/monetary\\_policy/inflation\\_calculator/](http://www.rbnz.govt.nz/monetary_policy/inflation_calculator/)), Editor



## CHAPTER 2: FIRES AND OTHER TRIALS 1855 - 1885

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair . . ." (2 Corinthians, Chapter 4, verse 8.)

In the "N.Z. Spectator" of the 21st February 1855, appeared the following item of news "On Friday evening last, the church at Porirua was unfortunately destroyed by fire. A fire had been lighted outside by the person in charge, a common practice since the earthquake, and by some means it communicated with the church which was soon down. The surplices, forms and other moveables were saved. " Apparently, however, there was a churchroom as well on this site (or one was built in surprisingly short time after the fire), for two months later the following notice also appeared in the "Spectator", 17th April, 1855. "At a preliminary meeting held in St. John's Church Schoolroom, Johnsonville, it was resolved that a public meeting of settlers in Porirua will be held in the above named place on Friday, 27th April, to devise some method whereby the rising generation may get education, the want of which is particularly felt in the district. All friendly are particularly requested to attend" - James Sim, Chairman. "

In the sixties, we find the first Bishop of the Wellington Diocese, Bishop Abraham, very much concerned too about education, particularly about the founding of church schools. In 1862, Mr Fox's house and land was purchased at Crofton, two miles from Wellington, for the purpose of establishing a church school for resident boarders and day boarders. The diocesan authorities, even in those days, with their limited financial resources made some attempt to meet the need for education which was being felt by the early settlers.

Difficulties were experienced in staffing the school from the outset and in 1862, the Rev. H.W. St. Hill, who had left Porirua and gone to Napier was back in charge of the Grammar School, Kaiwarrawarra and he used to take services at Johnsonville, which was then without a resident vicar, every Sunday.

### THE SECOND FIRE

The new church at Johnsonville was not destined to last very long. On Wednesday, 25th January, 1860, the following item of news appeared in the "N.Z. Spectator" under the title: *"Bush Fires – Owing to the long continuance of dry weather, we regret to learn that several accidents have occurred from burning off felled bush. On Friday night, 20th January, the new church at Johnsonville, Porirua Road was burnt to the ground. The fire is supposed to have originated from flakes of burning timber falling on the shingle roof. We understand the edifice was not insured. This was the second English Church at Johnsonville that has been consumed by fire. The house recently erected by, Mr Petherick was with great difficulty saved."*

This was indeed a blow. Two churches burnt down inside five years! Now indeed, difficult years were to follow while the small congregation worked to raise money for third church. In 1860 the Bishop reports to Synod: *"I regret to say that the church members living up the Porirua Road have been little attended to during the last nine months. Since the Rev. H.W. St Hill went to Napier I have given them, as others, a share of my own time and attention but such occasional visits are a great falling off from advantages they had in a resident pastor"* The Bishop was finding that, with only seven or eight clergymen in a growing diocese, there were difficulties everywhere.

However, in 1863 he is more cheerful: "Better days are in store, I trust, for the outlying districts. Standing Committee offer to contribute to the salary of a clergyman who is now ministering along the Porirua Road." This appears to have been the Rev. W. Tanner who was there for a short time. In a paragraph on church buildings he continues his report: "And so again at Hawtrey (or Johnsonville), the church members are interesting themselves to rebuild their church that was burnt down last year, and here I may gratify my own feelings and associations as well as probably please you, by mentioning that when the Rev. Stephen Hawtrey (who with other members of his family had given several acres of land to the church), heard of the intention



*Holy Trinity Church, Ohariu Valley, was built by George Kilsby and his son George, of pit sawn timber with roof of split totara shingles. On Trinity Sunday 1870 it was opened by the Bishop Octavius Hadfield. In 1877 it was strengthened by bracing, lining and the addition of porch and vestry. Since then it has changed little and with its cemetery and family monuments possesses a quiet dignity and simple charm. It is the oldest church building in regular use in the Wellington area.*

to rebuild and mentioned it at a meeting of his poorer parishioners at Windsor they volunteered to double their penny subscriptions for this special purpose".

Reporting again in 1862 he says: "I have no ministrations to report along the Porirua Road, but a sufficient sum of money has been collected with the S.P.C.K. grant to build a church at Hawtrey (or Johnsonville) towards which, by the way, the poorest inhabitants of the parish of Holy Trinity, Windsor, where the donor of the land, the Rev. S. Hawtrey, is the clergyman, have subscribed five pounds." When one recalls the picture nineteenth century England, as given to us by such writers as Dickens, the offering of five pounds in penny subscriptions to help with the rebuilding of the church in a faraway and savage land was a very real missionary effort on the part of those poor parishioners. We of Johnsonville thus have an abiding link with the parishioners of the Parish of Holy Trinity, Windsor.

In 1863, Johnsonville was still without a church and a resident vicar, but the Bishop reports that "a sum of £227/17/6 has been collected for rebuilding the church at Johnsonville and plans have been submitted to the Standing Committee and approved by them and the control taken." The grant from the S.P.C.K. was for £100. Finally in 1864 the church was opened. "A church has been built and opened for divine service at Hawtrey (or Johnsonville) but I have not been able to procure the services of a clergyman for the cure of souls," reports the Bishop. Apparently lay-readers carried on after the Bishop formally consecrated the new church and he states that: "The congregation has been as large as could be expected in the winter season."

### **RESIDENT VICARS AGAIN**

In 1865, after nearly five years without a resident vicar, the Bishop has this to report: "The residents along the Porirua Road from the neighbourhood of Johnsonville as far as Pauatahanui are exerting themselves satisfactorily for the partial maintenance of a clergyman and I am rejoiced to say that, for the present, they have Divine Service once every Sunday at Johnsonville and once a fortnight at Pauatahanui, the Rev. W. Sewell being the regular clergyman of the district, as well as Karcri and Makara and the Rev. H.W. St. Hill volunteers his services at Johnsonville every other Sunday. " Our old friend of the fifties, the Rev. H.W. St. Hill was back again in charge of the Bishop's small grammar school at Kaiwarrawarra after the resignation of Mr. W.L. Martin. There were fourteen boarders and two day boarders.

A little church was built at Karori in 1865 and the Rev. T. Fancourt, newly ordained, was priest-in-charge. In 1868, we find him ministering to Porirua Road and Karori and in 1870, he went to Lower Hutt. Later, in 1886, he was to return to the Parochial District of Porirua as one of the most respected parish priests in the diocese. A statistical report in 1868 shows that there were churches at the Hawtrey, Tawa Flat, Pauatahanui, Karori and Makara. The district was growing and extending rapidly.

### **HOLY TRINITY, OHARIU**

In 1870, Bishop Hadfield, a former Archdeacon and with twenty years' service in the diocese, became Bishop of Wellington and in his report to Synod in November he has this to say about the Parochial District of Porirua: "*Mr Fancourt's removal to the Hutt occasioned a vacancy in the country districts of Karori, Ohariu and Porirua, where he has been labouring for five years, greatly to the satisfaction of those who have had the benefit of his ministrations. In June, 1870, I had the pleasure of being present at the opening of a new church in the Ohariu Valley, Porirua. This was built by means of funds raised in the district and supplemented by grants from the S.P.C.K. and the Diocesan Fund, The Rev. H.W. St. Hill has held services at Karori and Johnsonville on alternate Sundays. He has likewise on other occasions devoted as much time as he could spare to the spiritual wants of the district. I am able, to say that I have been able to procure for this district the services of the Rev W.D.R. Lewis and he is expected to be instituted next month.*" Our good friend the Rev. H.W. St. Hill is still with us! He is indeed the father of the district. Off and on for over twenty years, he did what he could to care for the spiritual needs of the early settlers.

Troubles were still ahead, however, for the district. In 1871, the Bishop reports: "I regret to say that the united districts of Porirua and Karori have become vacant through the resignation of the Rev W.D.R.. Lewis. At present the Rev. H.W St. Hill is affording me valuable assistance in connection with Porirua."

In 1871, Standing Committee recommended that: "Karori and Makara form one district and be attached to one of the parishes and that the Porirua District include Pauatahanui, Johnsonville and Ohariu.- Here comes the first break in this huge parochial district. One of the daughter churches was big enough to stand alone.

In 1872, the Rev. W. Ballachey was appointed to Karori and Makara. He was to be associated with Karori for eleven years and many a time helped to assist Porirua when there were vacancies. In 1872, the Rev. T.L. Tudor was instituted Vicar of Porirua.

Throughout the years 1874-75, there were dark clouds again. The Rev. T.L. Tudor resigned in 1874 to go to Christ Church, Wanganui, which left a vacancy at Porirua which the Bishop was unable to fill. *"The Rev. H.W. St. Hill has kindly rendered some assistance, more especially in the administration of Holy Communion,"* comments the Bishop, *"and the Rev. W Ballachey has visited Porirua at stated intervals. "* In 1872, a well known figure Mr E. Battersbee was replaced as synodsmen by Mr T. Buchanan. Since the first Synod in 1859, Mr E. Battersbee had been synodsmen for the Porirua District. The Bishop also paid tribute to Mr France of the Ohariu Valley and Mr Toomath of Karori, both lay-readers: *"I would earnestly urge on churchmen in country districts the duty of giving their assistance by occasionally reading Divine Service on Sunday."*

## IN HOT WATER

In the year 1876, the Rev. J.A. Newth, M.A., was instituted Vicar of Johnsonville and Synod that year had some hard things to say about the state of parish finances. In a report of parochial accounts, the Committee states: *"They are compelled to report that the curates of Patea and Johnsonville have done the work very imperfectly and that the returns from Palmerston North are absolutely unintelligible. "* They continue: *"your Committee feels bound to call the attention of Synod to the fact which has come under their notice that the Bishop has made up deficiencies in salaries in two of the districts, that is, Porirua and Palmerston."* A pat on the back went to Marton: *"The Parochial District of Marton has set a very worthy example in paying the stipend of the clergyman without any help from the Diocesan Fund as in past years."*

Johnsonville, however, was not destined to emulate Marton. In 1877 the district was reprimanded for withholding special offertories from the Diocesan Secretary and that awkward Committee of Parochial Accounts states: *"Your committee would call particular attention to the fact that at Johnsonville and Karori sufficient efforts have not been made to provide a due proportion of the stipend for their respective clergymen. Your committee observes with 'surprise' that at Carlyle and Johnsonville no special offertories have been collected during the year "* Things were at a low ebb and the Rev. J.A. Newth was having a lean time! In 1877 there were sixty-six church families and nineteen communicants. The land now consisted of thirteen acres for a church, cemetery parsonage and glebe.

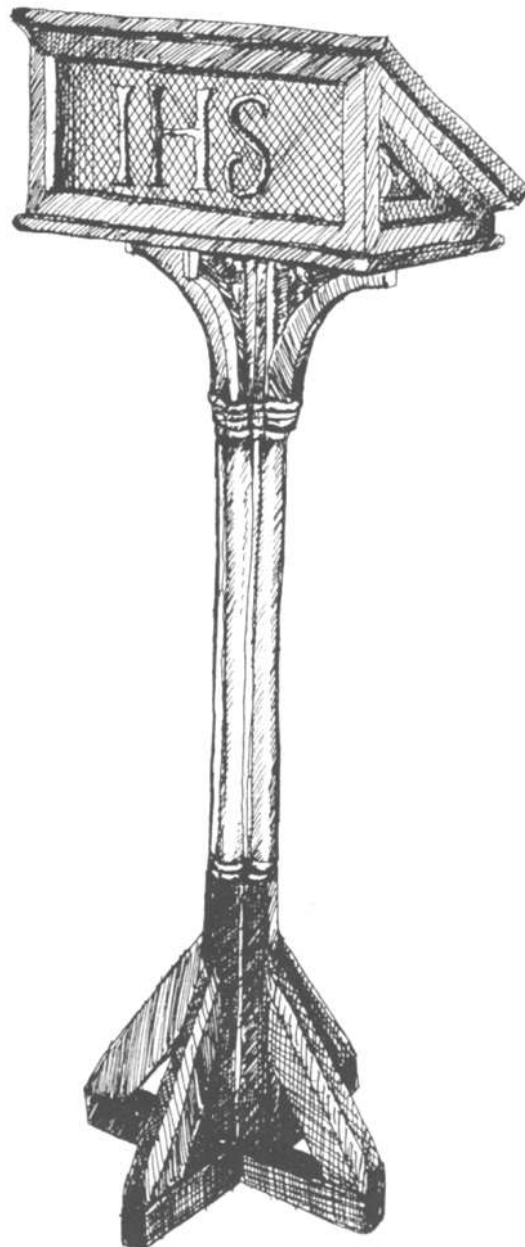
The Rev. J.A. Newth stayed for three years and then the Rev. W. Ballachey did what he could to keep things going. Mr France of the Ohariu Valley became synodsmen, a position he was to hold for many years. In 1881 there were no funds at all paid into the General Church Fund Account from Johnsonville, Ohariu, Pauatahanui and Horokiwi. The Committee continues'. *"This district extends longitudinally about eighty miles and includes many lateral valleys. Services are conducted by a clergyman at each place every second month. At Ohariu and Johnsonville lay-readers hold one service every Sunday."*

## ANOTHER FIRE

The years 1882, 1883 and 1884 found the district still vacant and the parsonage and glebe were let at a rental of £26 p.a. To add to the generally calamitous state of affairs into which the district had fallen financially, the

third church was burnt down in 1882 by a gorse fire lit by boys. Yet by the Middle of the following year a new church was built at Johnsonville and consecrated on the 15th July, 1883.

In 1884, the Rev. T. Fancourt resigned from St. James Lower Hutt to become Diocesan Secretary and from 1886 on, a general change for the better commences. In 1882, the Rev. Dasent had been instituted to Karori. Johnsonville and Ohariu were being worked from Karori. It was now a case of the daughter taking care of the mother. Standing Committee, reporting to Synod in 1885, says: "Assessments parishes and parochial districts are still received considerably after the date at which they are due. The cases of Greytown and Johnsonville require careful consideration at the hands of Synod. Johnsonville has only paid £36 of the £75 at which it was assessed. The only alteration in assessments that the committee begs to recommend is that Johnsonville and Ohariu be reduced by £25." Things were still in a bad way!





*Johnsonville looking north circa 1901. The fourth church can be seen amongst the trees in the distance. The Methodist church can also be seen on the right hand side of Main Street.  
(Photo: Head Collection, courtesy Alexander Turnbull Library)*



*St. John's from Burgess Hill circa 1895. Ohariu Road can be seen across the hill; behind the Church. Also Woodland Road and the Presbyterian Church can also be seen on the extreme left.  
(Photo: Bob Meyer Collection, courtesy Onslow, Historical Society)*



## CHAPTER 3: NEW ERA 1886 - 1925

"We are God's servants working together"  
(1 Corinthians, Chapter 3, verse 9.)

In 1886, the Rev. T. Fancourt, later to become the Archdeacon Fancourt and Bishop's Commissary, took up residence in Johnsonville and for nine years ministered to the spiritual needs of the district. At the same time, he held the position of Diocesan Secretary. In 1886 the Bishop, surveying the financial position of the diocesan funds, says: *"In consequence of this, with a view to relieving the General Church Fund, Mr Fancourt complied with a proposal that he should, for the present year combine with his secretarial duties the spiritual charge of Johnsonville and the neighbourhood. While assenting to this as a temporary arrangement from which I hope no harm will follow, I feel bound to express very distinctly my opinion, that it is essential that the Diocese should have the Secretary's whole time, otherwise I feel convinced it will suffer."*

No harm did follow. Johnsonville had only a low assessment to pay. The Rev. T. Fancourt carried out his secretarial duties and as years went on assumed more and more onerous diocesan duties and yet managed to put the large parochial district under his care on a sound footing. He was indeed a remarkable parish priest.

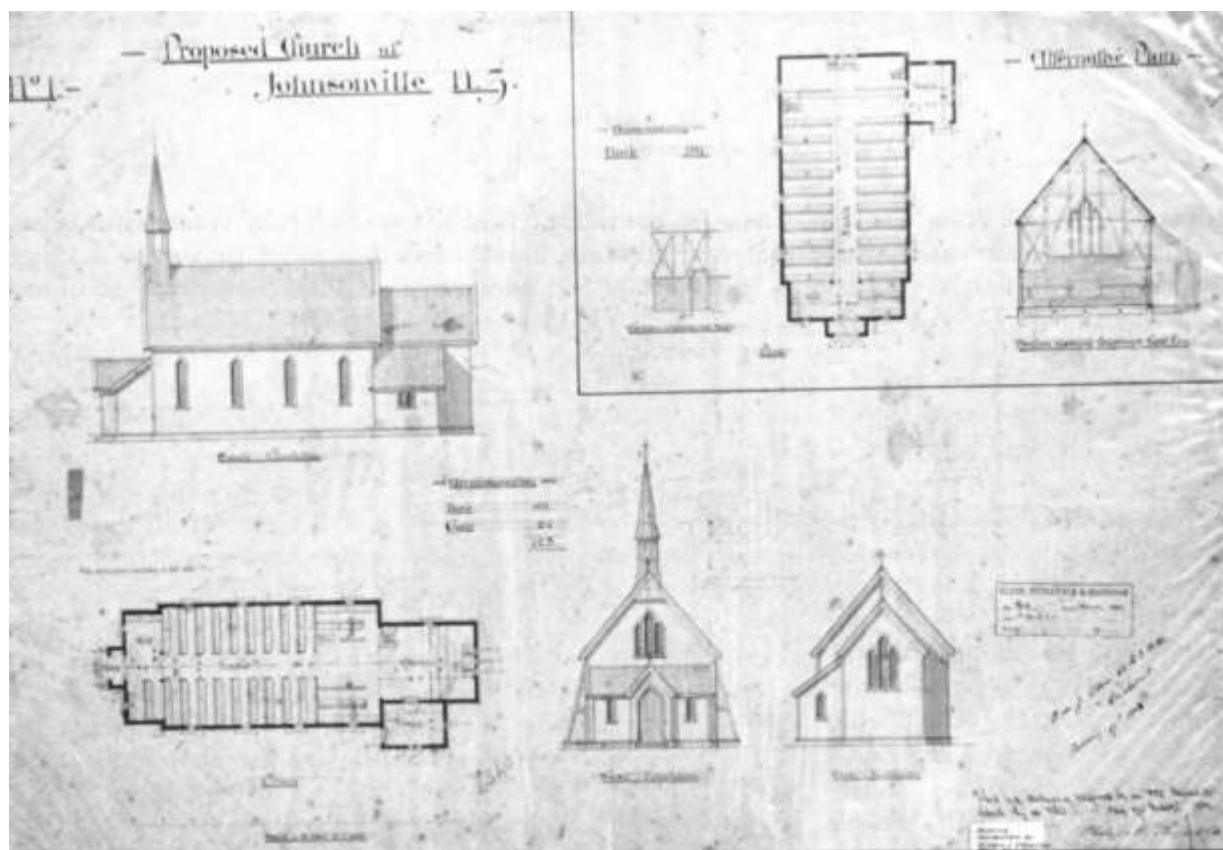
In 1887, another man who had made a great contribution to the life of the district and the church, finished his course. Speaking in Synod of the sudden death of Mr France, the Bishop says: *"He was an esteemed member of the Synod and also a faithful zealous lay-reader at Ohariu Valley. I can only look back with pleasure on my long official connection with him. A more straightforward, self-denying man I have seldom met."* Mr E. Darby now succeeded Mr France as synodsmen for Porirua.

In 1888, Thomas Fancourt, Vicar of Johnsonville and District, became Archdeacon of Wellington. The Bishop in his report to Synod says: *"I am happy to be able to inform Synod that the Rev Thomas Fancourt has complied with my request that he should accept the Archdeaconry of Wellington. In his presence, I can only say that I have the highest opinion of his piety, zeal and his devotion to his church which I have had the opportunity of observing during twenty-three years."* During these years, Karori and Upper Hutt had been going through bad times, but in 1889, the Rev. J.M. Devenish was transferred to Pauatahanui as priest-in-charge and Upper Hutt was created a missionary parochial district. As the Pauatahanui district extended beyond Paraparaumu, this considerably lightened the burden upon the Archdeacon, though the district still remained under Porirua. The finances of the Porirua District gradually began to improve.

In 1893, Archdeacon Fancourt was appointed Bishop's Commissary on the retirement of Bishop Hadfield and in 1895, Frederic Wallis became the new Bishop of Wellington. To assist the Archdeacon in his onerous duties, the Rev. H.L. Monkton was appointed curate to the Porirua District in 1895 and remained thus for one year. Mr C. Wackrow was now lay-reader and the churchwardens were C.H. Brown and H. Stebbings (Johnsonville); J.C. Bryant and A. Kilsby (Ohariu Valley). The Central Committee consisted of W. Cook, F. Moore, H. Bannister (Johnsonville); C. Wackrow, J. Searle, S. Bryant (Ohariu Valley); E. Allen, T. Simmons (Tawa Flat). Collectors for the General Church Fund were H. Bannister, C.H. Brown, H. Stebbings, J.C. Bryant, E. Allen and T. Simmons.

St. John's, consecrated on the 15th July 1883, had accommodation for 110, Holy Trinitt for 50, and St. Peter's, Tawa Flat for 50 also. Other services were held in the Public Hall, Khandallah which could accommodate 80, the services being held on alternate Sundays. The Rev. P.L. Cameron was now priest-in-charge of the Upper Hutt district and the district of Pauatahanui, seventy square miles, now came under his charge, though remaining part of the Parochial District of Porirua.

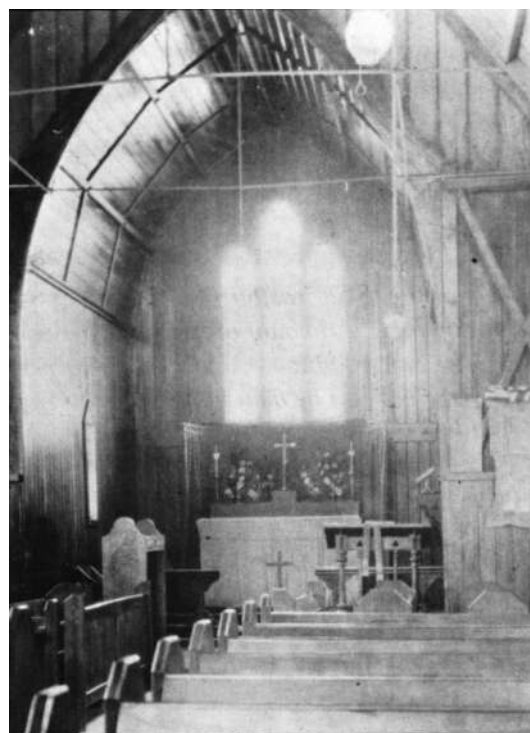
In 1895, the Rev. J.W. Chapman took over the reins of office from Archdeacon Fancourt, who after nine years as resident clergyman and Diocesan Secretary now took over full-time work as Diocesan Secretary. The



*Architect's drawing of the fourth church 1883. A tall narrow building which seated about 110. The version which had a separate sanctuary was the one built.  
(Photo: courtesy Onslow, Historical Society)*



*View, of cemetery and fourth church from Bassett Road. Built of poor timber it had a short life and was demolished in 1920 to be replaced with a concrete structure. (Photo: courtesy Onslow Historical Society)*



*Interior view of the Sanctuary. Note iron tie rods to roof and gas lights.  
(Photo: courtesy Onslow Historical Society)*

Committee during this year comprised W. Cook, S.P. Curtis, J. Moore, S. Vickers and G.G' Wilson' Mr R'Cook was auditor and Mr S.P. Curtis was synodsmen. Mr H. Stebbings was treasurer. The Rev' J'W. Chapman remained Vicar of the Porirua for six years and in 1897 he took charge of Pauatahanui when there was no priest there.

In 1900, St. Barnabas' in Khandallah was added to the list of daughter churches in the Parochial District of the Porirua, services also being held at St. John's, Johnsonville; St. Peter's, Tawa Flat; Holy Trinity, Ohariu; and at a hall in Porirua, late, to-be replaced by St. Anne's, Porirua. Churchwardens were C.H. Brown and W Cook; vestrymen were G. Best, G. Burghan, A. Kilsby and H. Stebbings. Mr S.P. Curtis was both lay-reader and synodsmen.

## INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The Rev. John Vosper, formerly of Australia, became Vicar of the Porirua District in 1901. In 1902' Khandallah was constructed a sub-district of the parochial district. In 1905, C.J. Mutter from England was instituted as 'lay-evangelist' and in that year, Khandallah was constituted a separate parochial district. Another daughter church was standing on its own. The Rev. E.W.J. McConnell was the first Vicar of Khandallah.

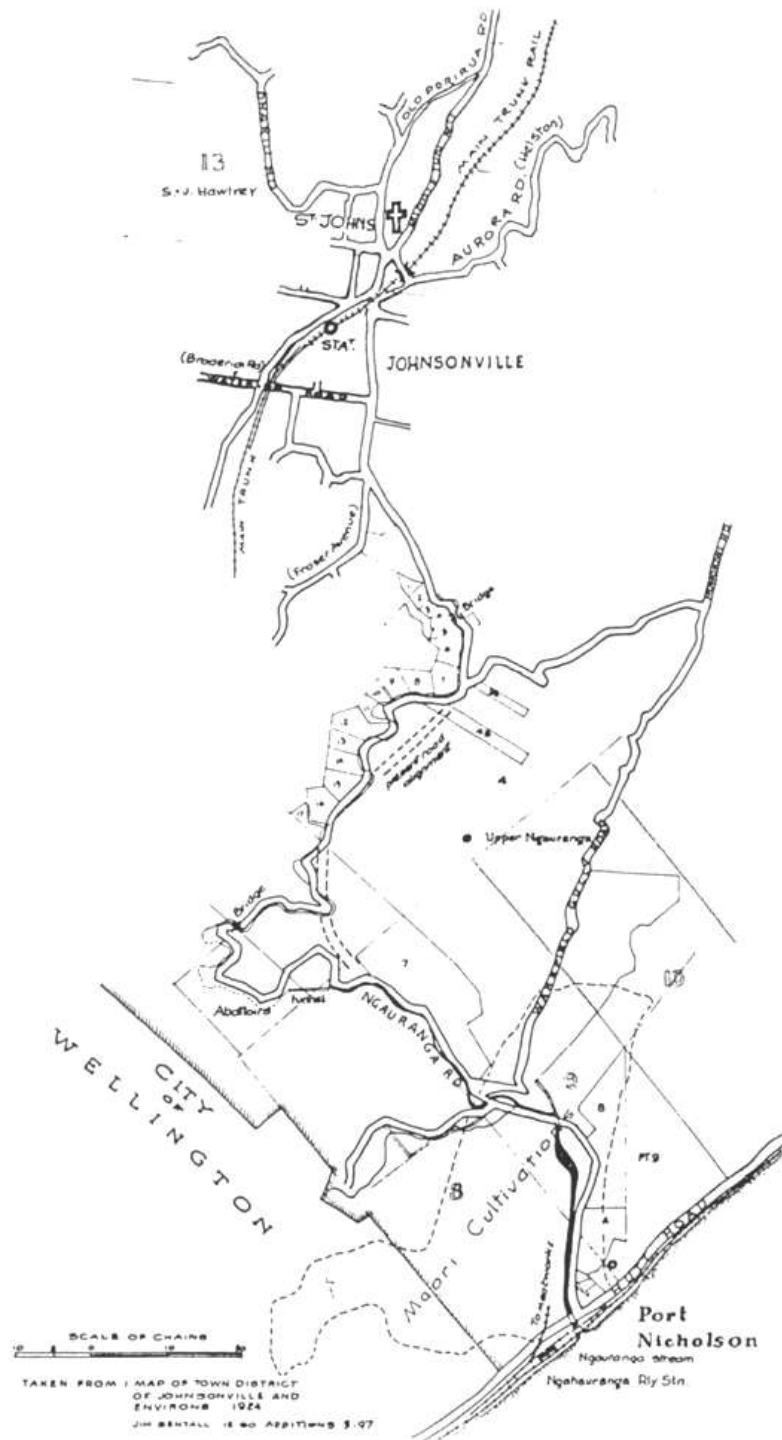
In 1909, the Rev. F.H. Petrie, (later, like his predecessor, the Rev. T Fancourt, to become an archdeacon and Bishop's Commissary), became Vicar of Porirua, and it was during his incumbency that in 1911, the Parochial District of Johnsonville was constituted. Daughter churches to break away were those of Porirua, Tawa Flat and Pauatahanui. In 1911, the Parochial District of Pautahanui was constituted, Mr E'L. Burgess being stipendiary lay-reader of this district. On 12th October, 1912, St. Michael and All Angels' was opened at Newlands.

## THE FIFTH CHURCH

In 1919, the Rev. C.H. Isaacson became Vicar of Johnsonville. The fourth church, which had been built in 1883, had become unfit for use and it was decided to erect a new church. The foundation stone was laid on 17th December, 1921 and the present St. John's was consecrated on 29th July, 1922, by the Rt- Rev. Thomas Henry Sprott. On 22nd March, the following notice appeared in the 'Evening Post': *"St. John's Church, an old landmark standing on the hill in the middle of the Anglican cemetery at Johnsonville will in a few days be pulled down in order to make room for a new church in reinforced concrete, designed as was the present one by F. de J. Clere. The site on which the church stands has perhaps had more churches built on it than any other in the country. The oldest resident, a man of eighty-five, remembers a church room, built on it in the late forties which was burnt down in the bush fires of the fifties. A new, one was again burnt down in 1860. The third, built in 1862, was burnt in 1882 by a gorse fire lit by boys. The present building, erected in 1882, had unhappily a large amount of sap timber used in its construction and is now quite unfit for use. For over five years, the congregation has worked for a new church, with the result that the committee now has £2,300 in hand. Services will be held for the last time in the church next Sunday when it is hoped that many old friends will gather once more in the building. The new church, which will seat over 200, is to be begun at once and it is hoped that the work will be sufficiently advanced for the foundation stone to be laid at Christmas."* One or two errors appear in this report: the third church was built in 1864 and not in 1862, while the fourth was built in 1883

When one looks back over the years 1901-1922, one sees that St. John's had many faithful church workers. The names of the following office bearers are but a small representation of those who worked so manfully for the welfare of the church. But there were many others, among them many women, whose names are not mentioned. The following name, however, may help to recall to those who read this history the people of those days. Among those who held office as churchwardens were Messrs Stebbings, Bethune, Wallis, Neilson, Jones, Mills, Gann and Treszise; lay-readers were Bethune, Curtis, Percival, Smith, A. Mills, and C.W. Pritchard. Synodsmen were C. White, W.N. Stace, F. Bethune, G.T. Hall and again C. W. Pritchard.

Then there were a host of men who served on the vestry of the church: Messrs Brown, Eason, Smith, Burgham, Ball, Cook, Kilsby, Searle, White, Wilson, Morris, Spicer, Newton, Swindlehurst, Mills, Hanna, Bould, Kirk, Wackrow, Bryant, Harrison, Halligan, Lough, Wallis, H.W. Lawrence, Tunley, Wilson, and lastly C.W. Pritchard.



1924 map shows early formation of the Gorge Road which follows the stream closely. Also note Bassett Road Extension which was the original Porirua Road route. This had a very steep descent to the stream in Middleton Road, known as Russell's Folly. (Courtesy Onslow Historical Society.)

## **CHAPTER 4: MORE IMPROVEMENTS AND A STORM 1925 - 1972**

"There are many events in the womb of time which will be delivered"  
(Shakespeare's 'Othello'.)

The fifth church to be built upon the site and consecrated by Bishop Sprott in 1922 was very different from its predecessors. Built in concrete with a square tower and heavily buttressed walls, there must have been a determination that it would not be consumed by fire as were three of the earlier churches. It was designed by Frederick de Jersey Clere, the Diocesan Architect of the time, who designed many of Wellington's churches. Built at much the same time as St. Mary of the Angels' church in Wellington, it may well have shared some of the concrete construction details at least on a more modest scale, particularly the dry moulded concrete window tracery, perpendicular in style. Internally its best feature was the heavy timber trussed roof frame and a tied rafter sanctuary vault. When it was first built it would have had a strong presence in the village, closing the main street vista as it still does today. The contractor was Mr Stamford of Wellington with Charlie Brown, blacksmith of Middleton Road, in charge.

### **1925 - 1953**

This period encompasses the ministries of 5 vicars: The Revs. H.A. Walke, C.J.G. Samuda, B.R. White, W.F. Bretton and J.P. Arlidge. Unfortunately not very much is known of this time as vestry minutes and annual reports have been lost. Also, people alive today who lived through this period were very young at that time. Most of the information we have comes from these people.

It would seem that through much of this period things were at quite a low ebb. The thirties were years of severe economic depression and the congregation was small. We read that in 1934 relief workers were employed on road works and tree planting in the Johnsonville area. Len Stebbings tells of the caring and supportive actions of Johnsonville residents who were at that time a small, tight-knit community. Nevertheless, there were improvements to the church, which must have been quite stark when first built with bare concrete floor and old furniture from the previous church.

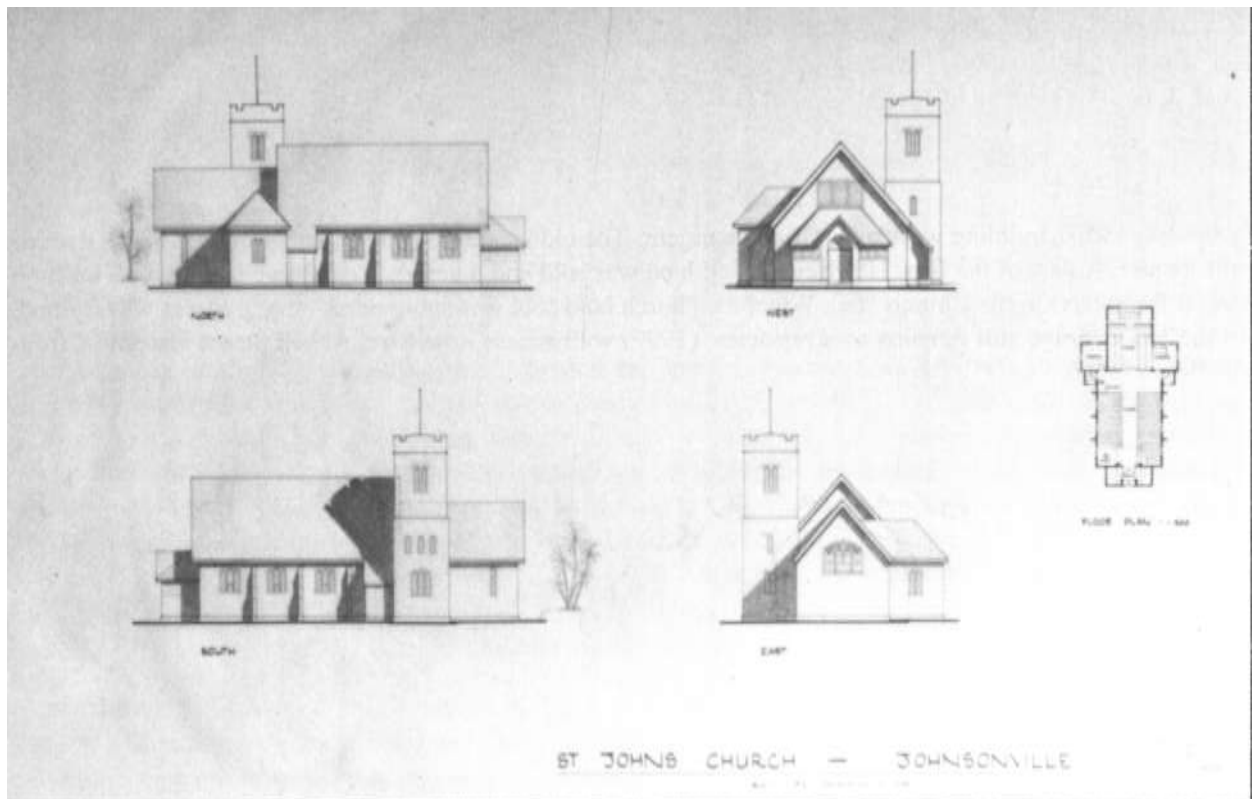
In 1930, Mrs Wallis, a well-known local resident (whose house in Frankmoore Avenue was where the Johnsonville Bowling Club now stands), gave the beautifully carved oak pulpit and reredos which would have been wonderful enhancements to the building.

The war period, 1939 - 1945, would likewise have been a lean and difficult time with so many of the menfolk away overseas.

The ministry of the Rev. W.F. Bretton, commencing in 1946, just after the war, would have been a brighter period. He came to St. John's from England and his ministry was an active one. Improvements were made to the church and many families donated pews. Brass plaques commemorate these gifts and can be seen today. A matai timber floor was built over the concrete slab.

"Bill" Bretton visited every residence in the parish. He encouraged the Ohariu Valley parishioners and held vestry meetings over there. The fabric of Holy Trinity Church was restored to good order, and Mrs Hope Bretton ran a Sunday School for the local children during church services. She was also very active at St. John's where she established a large Young Wives Group which met twice a month as well as encouraging the Mothers' Union.

Bill was an enthusiastic ringer of the church bell but this was not always appreciated by the local populace, especially at 7 a.m. when he said daily morning prayers.



*Architect's measured drawing of the fifth church before the 1980's extensions*



*Fifth church from Moorefield Road in 1950's. Note overgrown cemetery at the time.  
(Photo: Bob Meyer Collection, courtesy Onslow Historical Society)*



After 4 years of ministry, Bill Bretton left to become Vicar of St. James Church, Lower Hutt, and eventually Dean of Nelson Cathedral. He was followed at St. John's in 1950 by the Rev. J.B. Arlidge, and in 1953, by the Rev. R.S.S. Holland. Mr Holland's ministry was most sadly cut short in 1958 when, after a short period in hospital, he died very suddenly at home in the Middleton Road Vicarage.

## **NEW VICARAGE**

By the late 1950's building work again became urgent. The old vicarage, built probably in the 1880's, needed replacement. A part of the Rev. Hawtrey's gifted land was sold and a new brick veneer vicarage was built on Bassett Road next to the Church Hall. When the church land sold was subdivided, Angell Street was formed, but the old vicarage still remains as a residence (1997) with access now from Angell Street instead of from Middleton Road. On 18th September 1960, the Ven. D.B. Malcolm conducted a benediction service at the new vicarage.

The money received from the land sale also enabled extensions and repairs to be carried out to the hall with new toilets, new roofing and new hall flooring. It was the time of volunteer work teams who replaced the hall roof and also painted the walls. Other work done by parishioners about this time was the cleaning and varnishing of the church interior roof timbers. A huge scaffold was used and moved down the church as work proceeded. Sunday services continued below the scaffold tubes and planks. The work brought out the colour and grain of the rimu timber and greatly enhanced the appearance of the interior.

## **LAWN CEMETERY**

By 1961 the church graveyard had become a problem, being derelict and weed-covered. Only about 10 of the 600 plots were regularly tended. Lack of records prior to 1901 meant many names could not be traced and only about 400 graves could be found. A decision was made to close the graveyard and convert it into a lawn cemetery. It was necessary to contact families concerned wherever possible and inform them of the proposal. Many of course were remote from Johnsonville. Eventually about 100 were contacted and almost all agreed to the changes being made. On 13th November 1964 a special Act of Parliament gave authority for the church to do the work.

A bulldozer cleared the site in one day, topsoil was spread and grass sown. Later a Memorial Cross was installed complete with floodlights. The cost of the work was covered by donations from relatives. Looking back now the operation may seem drastic, but the maintenance of such a very conspicuous churchyard had created a major difficulty for the church at that time. The result has been most beneficial in giving a lovely foreground to the church and providing a green setting seen and appreciated from many areas of the rising hills around Johnsonville.

An important event earlier in the Rev. L.W. (Bill) Porteous' ministry was the holding of a "Forward Move" (Wells organisation) campaign. A large committee under Mr T.A. Turner's chairmanship organised visiting of parishioners. The aims were to encourage people to make a greater commitment to support the church financially, in attendance and in dedication of time and talents.

## **ORGAN**

By 1960 the old organ (housed in the base of the tower) was found to be in poor condition. A decision was made to replace it with a much better instrument. Led by the organist and choirmaster, Nigel Werry, the Choirs, Junior and Senior, worked hard and long over some years to raise money, mostly from the sale of firewood. The organist's fees at weddings, proceeds from concerts and a flow of donations also swelled the fund. In May 1970 the new organ was dedicated and the money raised had exceeded its cost. Negotiations for a 2-manual pipe organ with full pedal board and a detached console at a cost of \$6,460 had commenced in 1964. The possession of this fine instrument has given so much to the quality of music and worship at St.



*Aerial view 1959 showing cemetery and construction of Helston Road Motorway Bridge in progress.  
(Photo: National Publicity Studios Collection, courtesy National Archives)*



*The church approach 1961  
just before the formation of  
the lawn cemetery.  
(Photo: courtesy 'Evening  
Post' Wellington)*

John's and has proved well able to handle the greater volume and dimensions of the church as enlarged in the 1980's. The old organ was sold in 1970. Rebuilt, and with parts from another organ, it went to All Saints' Church, Otaki.

St. John's has had a strong choral tradition. Prior to 1958, Claude Sander, the organist at that time, had a boys' choir. In the 1960's the Junior Choir numbered 33 boys and girls, and there were 20 men and women in the Senior Choir. At the time of writing (1997) a choir, organised by well-known musician and lawyer Greg Knight, sings at Choral Evensong twice a month.

### **APPOINTMENT OF AN ASSISTANT CURATE**

Growth within the parish saw the appointment of an assistant curate at the end of 1962. The Rev. K.A. Bendall, who served the parish until mid-1965, was the first assistant curate at St. John's since 1905, and, according to available records, only the second to be appointed to the parish. At the time of his appointment the parish served 750 families. A house was bought at Newlands for the assistant curate. Mr K.A. Bendall was ordained to the priesthood at St. John's on St. Peter's Day, 29th June, 1964, the first and only ordination held in the parish. He was succeeded by the Rev. F.L. Paul, who was with the parish until 1971. He was succeeded that year by the Rev. C.S. Pinker.

### **\*WAHINE" STORM**

April 10, 1968, was Wednesday in Holy Week, and Holy Communion was held in the church at 7 a.m. A violent southerly gale rattled the tiles, a warning of damage to occur later in the day. About 10 a.m. tiles began to fly off, bombarding the church grounds and hurling them up to 50 metres. About half the tiles on the south side were stripped off, and many on the north side were broken. Rain poured through the roof and by noon the church was awash. Mr J. Douglas and the Vicar, the Rev. L.W. Porteous, worked quickly to remove everything possible to safety and Mr P. Hagen did an emergency job of lifting carpets to have them dried out. The parish hall was used for church services for the next eleven weeks, including Easter. Repairs to private homes had first claim on the time of workmen after the disastrous storm. It was early June before the church roof was restored. For two weeks heaters were left on full to dry the building out. Re-laying of carpets, re-varnishing and other work was carried out and services were resumed in the church on 30th June.

"Wahine" storm damage was not the only problem facing the parish early in 1968 - at the annual meeting in May the financial report showed a depressing overdraft of more than \$2,000. The Vestry decided to conduct a baby carnival to raise funds. By July it was in full swing, with four church groups sponsoring competitors. It fired enthusiasm and raised \$ 1,030 which, with a successful stewardship campaign and spring fair, eliminated the overdraft. The problems of 1968 were a challenge to the parish but as had been the case in former times, difficulties were met and overcome.



## CHAPTER 5: TOWARDS 150 YEARS 1972 - 1997



"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end."  
(Revelation, Chapter, verse 8.)

Since 1972, when St. John's celebrated the 125th Anniversary of the opening of the first church, Johnsonville has seen enormous changes which would have been hard to predict at that time. "The Village" centre has lost almost all its early buildings as it has adapted to its role as the commercial centre for the North Wellington area. From the perspective of the end of the century, we can see that St. John's would also have to change in order to continue to serve a new generation of parishioners, and to provide for the rapidly growing new housing areas and a more itinerant population. The challenge remains to continue to do so.

In 1973 the Rev. Bill Porteous left St. John's after a notable ministry of 15 years. During this period there was a large Sunday School, 3 Youth Groups, a Cub Pack, Scout and Venturer Groups, and active Junior and Senior Choirs. Bill Porteous moved to Waikanae to become Vicar of that parish, and was succeeded at St. John's by the Rev. Jack Orchard. Later that year discussion commenced about separating of the Newlands part of the parish, which had had its own church buildings since 1912.

It was also a time when "Church Union" was an important issue in the wider church, and in 1975 a diocesan questionnaire was received and responded to by Vestry which was not in favour of the plan as then presented, although "in principle" "Church Union" was seen as very desirable. Subsequently, this plan was also rejected by Synod.

In 1975 embroidered altar frontals to suit the liturgical seasons were completed. Designed and executed by John and Stella Wilkins and Carol Bauer, these have greatly added to the beauty of St. John's (and later complemented the new altar installed in 1990).

### PLANS FOR ANOTHER CHURCH

Early in Jack Orchard's ministry it was realised that the church building constructed in 1922 required major attention. The concrete structure was badly cracked in some areas. Walls, and particularly the tower, leaked badly, and the need to strengthen against earthquakes had become an important issue. Additional space was also necessary and liturgical thinking of the time required a less formal layout, bringing congregation and altar closer together. By April 1975 an engineer's report on the old building had been obtained, a decision made to demolish and build a new church, and parishioners had responded to a questionnaire regarding the type of building preferred. (Interestingly, the idea of a multi-purpose building had been rejected.)

A parishioner, Jim Bentall of NIB Architects, presented sketch designs for a new building and, but for the concerns of Bob Wells, a member of the Diocesan Properties & Liabilities Commission, a new church would have been built. As a boy, Mr Wells remembered seeing the church being built and greatly admired it. He asked that further consideration be given to strengthening and enlarging the existing structure as an alternative to replacement. This alternative was examined further and finally became the solution accepted by the parish. Thus the people of Johnsonville have been able to continue to enjoy the much loved view, modified only slightly, of the church and tower upon the hill.

Fundraising was a major project. The "Forward St. John's" campaign was launched and very successfully led by Col. Howard Leighton-Jones. On 15th October 1978 a promotion lunch and service were held at Onslow College, followed 3 weeks later with a special Thanksgiving Service. A good response enabled the first stage tender of Maycroft Construction to be accepted on 12th February 1979. Two more construction stages followed and on 7th March 1982 the enlarged, strengthened building was re-dedicated by Bishop Edward Norman. A brass plaque in St. John's entry foyer indicates the extent of the enlargement carried out at that time. The total cost of the work had been about \$150,000.

The final stage of rebuilding had put St. John's heavily in debt, but the parishioners had recognised that completion of the work was essential. Finance was raised from member in the form of debentures, and in particular a very large loan was provided by Len and Molly Stebbings, long-time, active parishioners, who had retired to Waikanae. A heavy cloud of debt hung over the parish for a lengthy period only relieved when a large bequest was received from Mr E.T. Butchers' estate, a cause of much heartfelt thanks. On 31st May 1987 Archbishop Brian Davis consecrated the completed extensions.

The Rev. Jack Orchard's time at St. John's was eventful. Another daughter church was born when Newlands was established as a separate Parochial District under the ministry of the Rev. Bob Peters who had been serving as Priest-in-Charge under Jack's guidance. A special meeting followed the service at Newlands on 25th July 1977 to elect a vestry for the new parish.

Jack instituted the Johnsonville Chapter of the Order of St. Luke, an ecumenical healing ministry, at St. John's. Monthly services with emphasis on prayer for healing were commenced.

The New Zealand Anglican Church's "New Liturgy 1970" was used for the first time that year - the first major change in the form of services held at St. John's.

The Rev. Jack Orchard left St. John's to become Vicar of St. Mary's, Levin and moved there with his wife, Gwen, in 1980.

The Rev. James Oulds arrived at St. John's later in 1980 with his wife, Marilyn and 2 young sons. Parishioners rallied to carry out improvements to the vicarage in time for their arrival. The Rev. James Oulds' ministry saw the completion of Stage 3 alterations to the church (removing the side walls and adding the aisles) with all the attendant disruption of the church services. Working Bees were organised, the interior was painted, drains were dug for the kitchen, and these were completed successfully. The kitchen allowed tea and coffee to be served after services and gave people an opportunity to stay awhile and strengthen friendships.

## **ST. JOHN'S VILLAS**

In 1984 a major decision was made to use the spare land behind the Vicarage for pensioner housing. Use of this land had been discussed for many years and not without strong differences of opinion. Eight units were constructed for pensioners to purchase, the ownership of the land remaining with the church. They were name "St. John's Villas" and administered by a Trust elected by parishioners, the first Chairman being Mr Clive Mildenhall. These villas clearly met a need amongst elderly people wanting to dispose of their larger family homes but keen to remain in the district, be independent, and close to facilities. When villas are sold, a percentage of the proceeds is kept by the Trust and is sometimes made available to assist with new capital work for St. John's - but is not available to cover ordinary expenses.

In 1985 a new kitchen was constructed to the east side of the hall, much improving facilities. The following year the front room in the hall was re-fitted as a parish lounge, and improvement were made to the Parish Office.

In 1986 the Oulds family left for service in Australia. The Rev. Philip Gibbs, at that time Vicar of St. Michael's, Stoke Newington, London, accepted an invitation to be the new Vicar at St. John's. His induction was held on 4th April 1987.

On 11th March 1990 (Johnsonville's 150th Anniversary) Archbishop Brian Davis consecrated a new oak altar matching the oak work in the sanctuary and made by Don Smith of Ohariu valley.

## **CHURTON PARK**

By the 1980's the Johnsonville suburb of Churton Park was becoming a large new housing area, with extensive future growth planned. A church building site had been allowed for, close to the proposed commercial area, although no commitment had been made with any of the Churches in Johnsonville. By 1989, under Philip Gibbs' leadership, a survey had been made of Anglicans in the area to gauge interest and support for the establishment of an Anglican Church. The Diocesan Parish Consultant, the Rev. Ray Muller, advised and assisted as discussions and planning went ahead. With help from the diocese and donations from parishioners, a house was purchased at 13 Halswater Drive, and in 1992 the Rev. Edrick Corban-Banks was appointed Assistant Priest at St. John's with special responsibility for the Churton Park District.

On 19th September 1993 weekly services commenced in Churton Park School with eighty people present.

In November 1994, after almost 3 years of very effective ministry, Edrick left with his family to become Vicar of Katikati.

The Rev. John Tovey was appointed Priest-in-Charge at Churton Park. This ministry has continued and on 1st January 1996, Churton Park became a separate Mission District. To mark the occasion, a special New Year's Eve Midnight Service was held at St. John's followed by a celebration at Church House. Yet another daughter church had been born.

In April 1996 the Rev. Philip Gibbs retired and moved to live in Levin. The period of his ministry had seen an extension of lay ministry participation in services, including the leading of Extended Communion Services in the Vicar's absence.

During the period of Philip Gibbs' ministry, a number of bequests were received enabling special work to be done:-

Seton Nossiter died in July 1989 and his bequest (\$1,000) provided new gates at Holy Trinity Church, Ohariu Valley.

Cyril Parsloe died in September 1989 and his bequest (\$2,000) purchased New Zealand prayer Books.

Winifred Gaye Norris died on 11th September 1990 and a memorial chalice and patten were presented to St. John's.

Una McNaught died on 7th October 1990 and her bequest (\$10,000) enabled site development to improve parking and also to create a "Garden of Rest" for the interment of ashes.

Muriel Hitchings died on 8th November 1992 and her bequest (\$5,000) was received for work in the Church Hall.

Alice Hazel White died on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1994 and her large bequest (\$86,000) was received for the use of St. John's Parish.

Doris Green died in 1996 and her bequest (\$1,000) was received and used for the purchase of chasubles.

The Rev. Derek Lightbourne, with his wife Ruth and grown-up family, was inducted as Vicar in October 1996. Major improvements were made to the vicarage prior to their arrival. The parish looks forward to his strong ministry into the 21st century.



## DIVISIONS OF THE ORIGINAL PORIRUA PAROCHIAL DISTRICT

The original district served by St. John's Church in 1847 (the Hawtrey Church) included the following settlements, a parochial district of 250 square miles or 640 square kilometres:-

Newlands:

Ohariu;

Makara;

Karori;

Ngaio;

Khandallah;

Tawa Flat;

Porirua;

Pauatahanui Basin;

Horokiwi.

By 1868           there were churches at Tawa Flat, Pauatahanui, Makara and Karori.

In 1870           there was a church at Ohariu'

In 1871           Karori and Makara became separate districts'

In 1900           St. Barnabas', Khandallah was built.

In 1905           Khandallah became a separate parochial district.

In 1911           Pauatahanui became a separate parochial district, and the Parochial District of Johnsonville was constituted.

In 1912           St. Michael's, Newlands was built.

In 1977           Newlands became a separate Parochial District.

In 1996           Churton Park became a Mission District.



## SOME DAUGHTER CHURCHES



*St. Mary's, Karori*



*St. Matthias', Makara*



*St. Alban's, Pauatahanui*



*St Barnabas', Khandallah*



*St Christopher's Tawa*



*St Michael and All Angels, Newlands*



*Church House, Churton Park*

The Rev Derek Lightbourne  
PO Box 13-253  
JOHNSONVILLE  
New Zealand

Rev. Jonathan Cruickshank  
Holy Trinity Rectory  
73 Alma Road  
Windsor SLA 3HD

Dear Derek

30 April 1997

Your letter dated 23 March 1997 to Canon Jeffery Whale has been handed to me and I was most interested to read of the connection between the Hawtrey family and your Parish. As it happens I have been doing some research into the memorials in Holy Trinity church and I had no idea of the giving of funds by the parishioners of our church to St John's.

I would be delighted to renew our contact with your church and would be most pleased to receive any information you may have.

Holy Trinity Parish is now part of the New Windsor Team Ministry, with Canon Whale as Team Rector and myself as Team Vicar responsible for Holy Trinity church and chaplain to the Household cavalry Regiment in Combermere Barracks, Windsor.

Rev John Hawtrey was Rector of Kingston-Seymour, Somerset and was never Vicar of Holy Trinity.. However, a large memorial in church describes him as follows:

Born at Exeter March 24 1781 died at Windsor 17 December 1853 aged 72. Educated at Eton college and for eleven years was an officer in His Majesty's Army. An earnest love of God, and devotion to his Saviour. Pervading and sanctifying a warm, loving, and energetic character'. Led him to spend his after life as a zealous Christian Minister- Being occasionally resident in Windsor. During his later years, he became the friend, and spiritual counsellor, of the soldiers of Her Majesty's Household Brigade quartered in that town, and dying there, his remains were at their-desire borne by them to his tomb.

John left his wife ANN and eight children, MONTAGUE' Anna, STEPHEN, Einily, Harriet, John, HENRY, and Florence. He was buried with Ann, who died July 3 1862, in a vault in the North West quarter of the Cemetery of the Parish of Eton.

His oldest son, Montague, also has a memorial to himself as he was a Captain in the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers who died at Odumasi near Kumsai on September 14 1904 aged 34 years whilst acting as His Majesty's Commissioner of the North West District of Ashbank.

Rev Stephen Hawtrey MA born July 1 2 1809, died October 29 1866 was Founder of St Mark's School Windsor and first Incumbent of Holy Trinity, 1842-1852. A large tablet was placed in his memory by former pupils of St Mark's School

Rev Henry Hawtrey, Stephen's brother, was also Vicar of Holy Trinity 1852-1873.

I look forward with great interest to hearing from you,

With every blessing  
Jonathan

Rev Jonathan Cruickshank  
Team Vicar

*This letter received from Holy Trinity Church, Windsor, adds to our knowledge of the Revs. John & Stephen Hawtrey, and renews St. John's links with that parish. See page 15 paragraph 2.*

## CLERGY OF THE PARISH

<b>VICARS:</b>	R. Cole	1847 -
	H.W. St. Hill	1859 -
	W.P. Tanner	1861 -
	H.W. St. Hill	1862 - 1864
	Vacant	1864 - 1865
	W. Sewell	1865 - 1868
	T. Fancourt	1868 - 1870
	W.D.R. Lewis	1870 - 1871
	T.L. Tudor	1872 - 1874
	W. Ballachey	1874 - 1876
	J.A. Newth	1876 - 1879
	W. Ballachey	1879 - 1882
	A. Dasent	1882 - 1886
	T. Fancourt	1886 - 1895
	J.W. Chapman	1895 - 1901
	J. Vosper	1901 - 1909
	F.H. Petrie	1909 – 1919
	C.H. Isaacson	1919 - 1925
	H.A. Walke	1925 - 1935
	C.J.G. Samuda	1935 - 1942
	B.R. White	1942 - 1946
	W.F. Bretton	1946 - 1950
	J.B. Arlidge	1950 - 1953
	R.J.S. Holland	1953 - 1958
	L.W. Porteous	1958 - 1973
	J.D. Orchard	1973 - 1980
	T.J. Oulds	1980 - 1986
	P.R. Gibbs	1987 - 1996
	D.H. Lightbourne	1996 -

<b>ASSISTANT CURATES:</b>	C.G. Mutter	1905 -
	K.A. Bendall	1962 - 65
	F.L. Paul	1965 - 71
	C.S. Pinker	1971 - 75
	R.W. Peters	1975 - 77
	E. Corban-Banks	1992 - 94



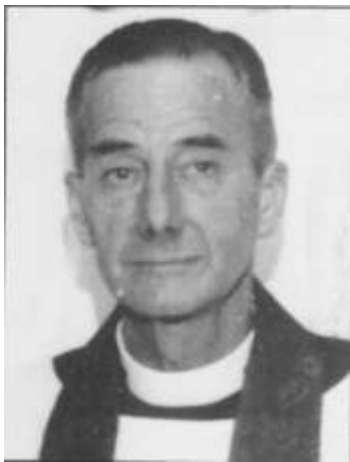
*Rev. H.A. Walke*



*Rev. W.F. Bretton*



*Rev. R.J.S. Holland*



*Rev L.W. Porteous*



*Rev. J.D. Orchard*



*Rev. T.J. Oulds*



*Rev. P.R. Gibbs*



*Rev. D.H. Lightbourne*

## **GLOSSARY OF SOME TRADITIONAL CHURCH TERMS**

<b>Nave</b>	The central space of the building where the congregation sits. Historically, the word has a connection with the body of a ship carrying people in safety.
<b>Transepts</b>	Side arms of a church when built in the shape of a cross.
<b>Sanctuary</b>	The most holy part of the church containing the altar usually at the east end of the building.
<b>Belfry</b>	Upper storey of a tower containing a bell or bells rung to announce services, weddings and other special occasions.
<b>Altar</b>	The table for the celebration of Holy Communion.
<b>Frontals</b>	Decorative panels attached to the front of the altar, often of embroidered cloth, in different colours for the various church seasons.
<b>Reredos</b>	Carved, decorative timber seen on the east wall behind the altar.
<b>Lectern</b>	Bookstand holding the large, church Bible used for readings at services.
<b>Font</b>	Receptacle for water used in baptisms, symbolically placed near the entry to the church.
<b>Chalice</b>	Holy Communion cup from which the wine is shared.
<b>Patten</b>	A silver or gold plate used to distribute the bread at Holy Communion.



*Christening Service in progress at St. John's 1997.*



*Parish group photo, outside St. John's 1996.*



*Often heard, but rarely seen... ,Sr. John's bell.*

*The inscription reads : -*

A.M.D.G.

IN MEM.

MATILDA LANE DAWSON

O B. 1921

Makers: Mears & Stainbank Founders London



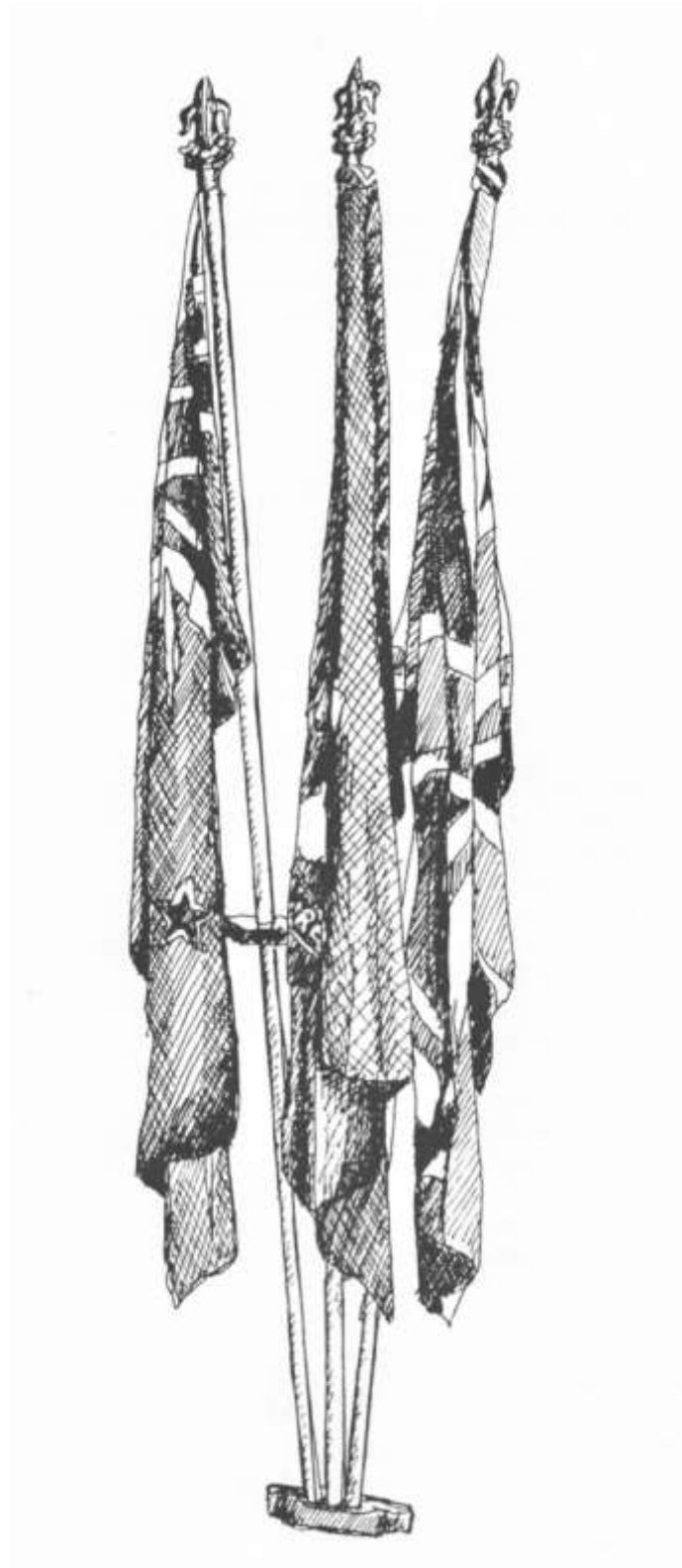
*Nigel Werry playing for the Thursday morning Holy Communion service. He has been Director of Music and organist at St' John's since 1958, and his contribution to Church Music was recognised in 1992 when he was made an Associate Member of the Royal School of Church Music.*



# CALENDAR OF NOTABLE EVENTS IN JOHNSONVILLE

## 1847 - 1997

- 1840 Founding of Wellington; first settler ships arrive
- 1842 Frank Johnson sets up sawmill in Johnson's Clearing
- 1846 First church and schoolroom opens (Methodist)
- 1847 First Anglican church opens (St. John's)
- 1848 Major earthquake destroys many Wellington buildings
- 1855 Second major earthquake raises-land around harbour(Hutt Road, Ngauranga foreshore, Basin Reserve etc)
- 1859 Ngauranga Gorge route from Wellington opens
- 1867 First public school opens in Johnsonville (on site of present telephone exchange)
- 1871 First Post Office opens
- 1873 Johnsonville Town Board is established
- 1886 Wellington and Manawatu Railway Co. line built to Longburn via Johnsonville
- 1890 First Police Station opens
- 1908 Manual telephone exchange built  
Johnsonville Town Board becomes independent  
Hawtrey Estate opens up for housing
- 1912 Acetylene gas street lighting installed (40 lamp posts)  
First piped water supply  
Sewerage system installed about this time
- 1914-18First World War
- 1916 Rail crossing across Main Street closes; traffic diverted up Frank Johnson Street
- 1920 Wellington Brickwork Co. opens works on site of present Moorefield Road
- 1925 Electricity is turned on
- 1930 Brickworks closes; Moorefield Road built  
New road to Wellington via Khandallah formed
- 1937 Tawa railway deviation complete; last passenger train through Johnsonville 17<sup>th</sup> June (Field's Express to Palmerston North)
- 1938 Electric train service to Johnsonville commences (on old Main Line track)  
First State houses built in Bould Street
- 1939-45Second World War
- 1942 Two heavy earthquakes - many chimneys down
- 1943 Voluntary Fire Brigade forms
- 1951 Motorway to Takapu Road opens along disused rail route
- 1953 Johnsonville becomes part of Wellington City
- 1956 Onslow College opens (Co-ed Secondary School)
- 1960 Johnsonville motorway by-pass constructed
- 1963 Heavy flooding in central area
- 1965 Johnsonville Library opens
- 1967 Residents vote for restoration of liquor sales
- 1968 'Wahine Storm' causes much damage to property
- 1969 Shopping Mall built
- 1973 Wellington Meat Export Co. Works at Ngauranga closes
- 1976 Major flooding again; drainage tunnel constructed later
- 1993 Enlarged and refurbished Shopping Mall re-opens  
New retail shops built on east side of Main Street





**St John's fourth church painting by R Watts, 1917. 4 years before demolition**

**Back cover:**

**Alter Frontals**

<b>White:</b>	<b>Christmas and Easter</b>
<b>Purple:</b>	<b>Advent and Lent</b>
<b>Green:</b>	<b>Pentecost and Epiphany</b>
<b>Red:</b>	<b>Saints Day</b>

